

refugees and for international and national medical staff in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

REHABILITATION OF KOSOVO

Following the cessation of hostilities and the return of refugees to Kosovo, UNFPA, along with other United Nations agencies, quickly established an office in Pristina, the capital of the province. As part of the civil administration authorized by the United Nations Security Council, UNFPA is a member of the Joint Civil Commission on Health, which is responsible for developing health policy and which includes representatives from the United Nations and from all of the communities in Kosovo. UNFPA heads the Reproductive Health Policy Task Force of the Joint Civil Commission and the Reproductive Health Coordination Committee, which includes representatives of all the United Nations bodies, NGOs and bilateral aid agencies working in reproductive health. The Policy Task Force has worked with the Kosovo Institute of Public Health, a local organization, to draw up a Reproductive Health Policy, which will guide the work of all organizations as they undertake the rehabilitation of the province.

UNFPA'S PRIORITY AREAS

The main concern of the United Nations in the area of health is to help reestablish the public health system in the province in order to meet the health needs of all the people of Kosovo. The overall needs throughout the province are overwhelming, and most of the health infrastructure has not been properly maintained; much of it was destroyed or removed during the recent hostilities. Equipment in hospitals is either obsolete and/or broken, including such basic equipment as washing machines and incubators for premature babies. Many health facilities have been left in decay, with broken windows, useless heating systems, and little or no functioning equipment.

The maternity, obstetric and gynecological clinic in Pristina delivers some 30 to 40 babies per day; it is on target to deliver 12,000 babies in the coming year, which would give it the largest number of deliveries of any hospital in Europe. It is achieving this with one broken-down washing machine and a shortage of sheets, gowns, incubators and ultrasound machines. On particular busy days, it does not have enough cribs in which to put the newborns, even when they are doubled up. Many of the deliveries are premature, born to women who suffered great trauma and stress during the hostilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that almost 50 percent of premature infants born in the Pristina Hospital do not survive. Other problems related to the effects of the hostilities are a higher-than-normal incidence of miscarriages and still births, both of which put the lives of mothers at risk. Conditions are equally poor, if not worse, in maternities and health centres outside Pristina. In light of the above, it is essential to upgrade the equipment of the maternity at the Pristina Hospital and in other regions of Kosovo, as a critical first step in safeguarding maternal and child health within the overall context of the rehabilitation of the health system of Kosovo.

UNFPA is playing a key role in the area of reproductive health by helping to assess reproductive health conditions and needs; by supplying urgently needed equipment, materials, and medicines for hospitals, primary health facilities and mobile clinics; by providing training and support for health staff; and by supporting health information and education programmes. UNFPA has begun work with its other partners in Kosovo in drawing up a standard reproductive health-training curriculum for health workers in

the province. It is designed to raise their awareness of reproductive health needs and to provide basic and refresher training in basic reproductive health skills.

The issue of sexual and other violence against women in Kosovo is a very serious issue. UNFPA has sent an expert on sexual violence to the province to report on ways in which the health system and health workers in Kosovo can address these issues in a culturally sensitive manner. Another component of UNFPA's strategy in the area of health, education and community services focuses on mental health, particularly the mental health of women. Violations of human rights and human dignity have been used as a systematic way of conducting war and have left profound scars that may not disappear. Victims of torture or violence, be it physical, sexual or psychological continue to suffer from significant trauma. To provide counselling and to prevent ostracism and exclusion of the victims from their own communities, UNFPA will continue to help strengthen local community capacity to provide care and support to women and men in distress.

There is an urgent need in Kosovo for demographic and health status of Kosovo since the return of the refugees in June this year. Given the new situation, all prior census and other data—if they can be found—are obsolete. All relief organizations working in the province are looking for such information to use in their operations. To that end, UNFPA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) jointly organized a preliminary mission to assess the feasibility of a cluster sample population survey in Kosovo. The two organizations have developed a proposal for a survey of about 9,500 households. The results of the survey will be made available to all interested agencies and to the public.

Therefore, as priority measures for emergency relief and rehabilitation in Kosovo, UNFPA is preparing to undertake three crucial projects in the short term: upgrade the equipment of the maternity/OB-GYN department of Pristina hospital, and to provide basic equipment and supplies to maternities and "birthing centers" elsewhere in the province; strengthen local capacity to identify members of the community who need psycho-social support and to provide care and support to these women and men; and undertake an urgently needed demographic, socio-economic and reproductive health survey of the province.

TRIBUTE TO DARRELL W. OPFER

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the lifelong contributions that Representative Darrell W. Opfer has made to Ohio and more specifically, the Fifty-Third Ohio House District. For the last seven years, Darrell has been the epitome of a public servant in the Ohio House of Representatives. He works tirelessly to represent both Ohio and his district to the best of his ability, and for this we are greatly indebted. On behalf of Ohio's lawmakers and citizens, I am pleased and honored to pay tribute to this outstanding leader.

Born and raised Elmore, Ohio, Darrell has been a resident of Ottawa County and the Fifty-Third district his entire life. After completing bachelor's and master's degrees from

Bowling Green State University, he entered the Peace Corps as a volunteer school teacher, instructing schoolchildren in East Africa. Upon his return, he spent sixteen years teaching high school government and social studies at Genova High School.

Darrell began his political career by serving as an Ottawa County Commissioner for ten years. During this time, he helped form the Ottawa County Visitors Bureau and the Community Improvement Corporation. These organizations have improved the quality of life in his district, as each implemented programs to create more jobs and support local businesses.

Darrell was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives, where during his first term he became known for his bipartisanship. During his tenure in the Ohio General Assembly, he was a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, Finance and Appropriations Committee, Local Government and Townships Committee and Veteran's Affairs Committee. He was also the ranking minority member of the Agriculture and Development Subcommittee. In his last two terms in office, he was dedicated to bringing about electric deregulation, attempting to meet the needs of schools, local government, industry, customers, and public utilities. Through his career Darrell passed a remarkable amount of legislation, personally sponsoring 30 bills and co-sponsoring 718 others. During his years of service in Columbus, he never missed a session of the Ohio House of Representatives and never missed a vote. In 1991, he earned the Outstanding Chief Elected Official Award, presented by Ohio Training Directors Council. His steadfast dedication in representing his district as an Ohio House Member was only interrupted by state mandated term limits.

Darrell has always been wise counsel to other elected officials and community leaders, quietly building coalitions on issues, bringing various points of view together in discussions, and offering his expertise with myriad concerns. Throughout his years as a Commissioner and State Representative, I have sought his advice many times and know him to be a man possessed of great skill and a wealth of knowledge. He has truly been an invaluable resource for all Ohioans and for us in Northwest Ohio.

Upon Darrell Opfer's retirement from the State House, the prosperity of Ottawa County and jobs for its residents continue to drive his ambitions. After careful consideration, he accepted the position of director of Ottawa County's economic development program. He plans to use his government, utility, and business acumen to further economic development throughout Ottawa County.

Walter Lippman once said, "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. . . . The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully." The work of Darrell Opfer has made out state a better place to live. On behalf of the entire Ohio community, I would like to thank you, Darrell, for your loyalty and service to our state and your district. We will certainly miss your skills as a legislator, but you know that you will continue your dedication to leadership and service in your new position. Good luck and God bless.